

# DISABILITY LESOTHO



## From the Editor

Dear Partner,

Welcome once again to the edition of Disability Lesotho, the monthly email newsletter from Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled. The edition will cover news for the Month of August, 2020

Women's month is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on women's achievements, as well as the problems they have faced in the struggle to be free and the important role they continue to play in society. Apart from their traditional roles as mothers, wives and caregivers, statistics show that women are making great progress in business, politics, academic and economic careers with more and more women reaching top positions. To all these women with disabilities are not exceptions, they deserve to be told of important role they are playing in life.

Women of Lesotho, women with disabilities you are very important, you deserve credit.

If you would like to contribute to the next issue or have received this newsletter from a third party and wish to be included on the mailing list please contact Pascalina Letsau on (+266) 5905 5406 or [pletsau@gmail.com](mailto:pletsau@gmail.com)

If missed any edition please visit [www.lnfod.org.ls](http://www.lnfod.org.ls) We welcome any feedback that may improve the quality and content of this free service.

Best regards,



The Editor

# GENERAL NEWS

## A beacon of hope for people with disabilities in Lesotho

By Leoma Monaheng



August 19, 2020 at Naleli – As the world celebrates World Humanitarian day, here in Lesotho we commemorate this special day with the sod turning ceremony of LNFOD's much needed head offices which will be an exemplary flagship building of inclusive design in the country. The offices are being designed and built by rise International – Relationships Inspiring Social Enterprise - a non-profit organization.

Established in 1989, LNFOD is an organization of organizations of persons with disabilities. In order for the organization to grow, LNFOD has joined forces with rise international, through the in loco fellowship program to build offices that will serve as a beacon of hope for people living with disabilities. These will be highly inclusive offices that will serve as a pedestal for all other inclusive spaces present, and those to come.

Speaking on behalf of the organization, Nkhasi Sefuthi, Director of LNFOD, stated that, "LNFOD requires to have its own building in order to increase its independence and capacity as a civil society organization. LNFOD should be seen to practice what it preaches by having an inclusive and accessible building, which can be used by all persons with disabilities without any difficulties.

The building should serve as the model for accessibility in Lesotho as a way of sending a strong message to service providers to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities."

The ground breaking event for this momentous occasion takes place at LNFOD's site in Naleli on Wednesday 19 August at 10a.m. Speaking on behalf of the main donors from Austria, Simone

Peter and Elmar Hagmann, had the following to say, "Ground breaking is always a historical moment. In this case ground breaking has a special significance for Sedlak GmbH and Brot für die Welt who are partners in this symbolic project. This building project is not only providing long needed accessibility to our partner LNFOD but also creating learning opportunities for Basotho youth through rise international's in loco project. To build an inclusive future for all, it is young people and young entrepreneurs who should form an essential part of this. This building will be a visible example of how we can learn jointly and as a society to become more inclusive through creating accessible spaces."

rise focuses on economic development through job creation and skills development in the built environment through a practical "learning by doing" design, build & entrepreneurship fellowship program. As rise's Founder and Executive Director, Daniela Gusman explains, "The process is as important as the end result, as the design and construction of the building offers young talented entrepreneurs the opportunity to gain essential practical work experience through this live project where they get to do everything from participatory design to project management, until the project is complete, under the guidance and supervision of Basotho and international professionals. We are very excited to be partnering with LNFOD, Sedlak GmbH and Brot für die Welt for this our third in loco fellowship."

# GENERAL NEWS

## NACOSEC welcomes Disability Inclusive Response to COVID-19

By: Moeletsi Rabasotho

LNFOD through its advocacy task team (ATT) held lobbying meeting with the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC) on 12 August 2020 demanding full participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 interventions. It is this meeting where LNFOD presented their demands which needed urgent attention of the coordinating body. NACOSEC commended LNFOD for being proactive and taking a stand to be part of the solution.



LNFOD felt there is a need for self-representation of persons with disabilities in the COVID-19 decision making bodies from the community, district and national level to ensure disability inclusive and accessible COVID-19 interventions. The representatives' role is to ensure that COVID-19 community, district and national responses should explicitly reflect on the situation of persons with disabilities in relation to COVID-19 and clearly specify through disability specific targets and indicators including the governance guidelines on how persons with disabilities will [participate in the fight against COVID-19 at all levels.

Education about the disease is always considered an integral part of the preventive measure if the country is to overcome any diseases and more when facing a communicable disease. LNFOD believe that COVID-19 public information and communication should be produced in accessible formats, including in braille, augmentative communication, easy-to-understand materials, in sign language and large print. Persons with disabilities are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and disability, and the government of Lesotho has announced that they would have a share of the relief fund. To date persons with disabilities have not been provided the grant. LNFOD demand that disability grant in the tune of M800 per month so as to address social and economic impact of COVID-19 to persons with disabilities.

Quarantine and isolation centers should be user friendly to persons with disabilities who may be infected of coronavirus pandemic and the state should ensure the enjoyment of the personal assistance services to such people with disabilities during the quarantine period.

On behalf of NACOSEC, Deputy Chief Executive - Operations Support, Mr. Litsebe Jimson said leaving persons with disabilities behind in the response against the COVID-19 Pandemic would be the biggest mistake that the country can make. He welcomed the submissions from LNFOD and promised to discuss them with the entire secretariat and then call LNFOD management to map a way forward.

# GENERAL NEWS

## Celebrating women with disabilities!!!

By: Makatleho Molotsi

In August 1956 more than 20 000 South African women marched against the then South African government in protest against the laws of Pass being extended to women. This was for the first time women in collaboration aired the voice against the political decisions made in their absentia. Following this, African nations started acknowledging the strength and contribution of women in different spheres of the societal life. Since then, August was titled African Women's month in Africa. This is the month in which African societies celebrates, acknowledge the meaningful contribution of women in different spheres of societal life. Though it is now acknowledged that women meaningfully contribute in society women with disabilities do not really share equally this glory. This is because of the stigma and the negativities held by the societies against people with disabilities where women with disabilities suffer twice as compared to men with disabilities.

LNFOD through its Women Committee in celebration of women's month held an event in which women with disabilities celebrated women's month. The purpose was to celebrate women with disabilities as equally powerful and contributing members of the society. Here women with disabilities shared their experiences where they explored the opportunities and challenges they face when participating in economic activities working as individuals as well as in partnerships. With the existing opportunities women explored the ways in which they can maximize their participation in society and influence change. Among others women focused much on how they can maximize their income and eventually enhance their status in society.

22 women participants pledged to take advantage of the new LNFOD project 'Gender and Disability rights practice' which has the women economic empowerment component in which women with disability shall be assisted financially to establish viable business. Women with disabilities shall also be capacitated in business management and book keeping and well as producing commodities.



# GENERAL NEWS

## Covid-19 economic empowerment skills for Deaf women

By: Bongiwe Buzi



National Association of the Deaf Lesotho (NADL) during this month equipped a total number of 20 Deaf Women from Maseru, Mafeteng and Leribe with tapestry skills that was provided by Ms Libuseng Ramalohlane owner of Thebe ea Bacha Tapestry who devoted her time and skills to empower People with disabilities for free during the month of August to commemorate Women's month. This was a token and means of empowerment to Deaf Women during the Women's month and also a way of showing support in order to tackle poverty and unemployment that is brought by covid-19 epidemic amongst People with disabilities and other vulnerable groups worldwide. Covid-19 have added a spike in women and hit them hardest as many are at the risk of being affected by other infectious diseases and faced by violence within their relationships. Also the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures. The gender-based violence is increasing in an alarming rate within the society, due to the fact that many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers.

Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex. The economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, and holding insecure jobs or living close to poverty, specifically Women with disabilities because of lack of inclusion within the society.

However, it is very crucial that economic recovery measures during and after the COVID-19 crisis aim at building more equal, inclusive and sustainable economies and societies. This includes gender-responsive economic and social policies and placing economic lives at the heart of the pandemic response and recovery plans.



# GENERAL NEWS

## Gender Sensitive Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities

By: Makananelo Ramoholi

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) protects the right of persons with disabilities to education, free from discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. In particular State Parties are obliged to ensure inclusive education system at all levels. Learners with disabilities should be able to participate in general mainstream schools to ensure lifelong learning that is characterized by quality, continuity and relevance. However, in Lesotho like most states which have ratified the Convention, the trend is that children with disabilities are either out of school, in special education schools or are in general mainstream schools that are hardly inclusive. Where they are confronted with mainstream schools the tendency for a majority is for them to drop out due to lack of provision of accommodations.

Whereas significant strides have been made in Lesotho towards the promotion of inclusive education such as the adoption of the Inclusive Education Policy in 2018, the gender perspective remains a crucial aspect that cannot be overlooked throughout qualification this journey. That is, what are the inherent underlying societal norms and cultural biases around gender and disabilities that are likely to affect either boys or girls and men or women in the education system? The implications of gender and disability negatively affect the learning outcomes for boys and girls with disabilities.

The educational attainment among the disabled persons as disaggregated by sex in Lesotho indicates that there is a larger proportion of men as compared to women who neither never attended school nor had any (The Population Housing Census, 2016). However, it cannot be disputed that girls with disabilities are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged group in our society. The United Nations Girl's Education Initiative has pointed out that there has been evidence of greater numbers of girls with disabilities who are enrolled and retained in school, yet on the other hand there is also consistent reference to girls with disabilities dropping out of school more than boys and often due to gender related challenges. For example; issues such as gender based violence, early pregnancy and lack of adequate WASH facilities for menstruation disproportionately affect girls with disabilities. The 2017 baseline survey by LNFOD indicates amongst others that comparatively there is higher proportion of males with disabilities who had gone beyond high school than the females with disabilities.

For this reasons the long-term social status of girls with disabilities is affected as lack of access to education in turn implies that they are also likely to be excluded from employment opportunities. LNFOD is accordingly implementing a program on gender and disability rights in practice that will see the mainstreaming of gender across its programs and its overall structure. The project will touch on areas such as gender based violence, inclusive education and economic empowerment to promote gender equality and women empowerment in the disability sector in Lesotho.

## GENERAL NEWS

**"We will never give-up....."**

**By: Pascalina Letsau**

Makoabating persons with disabilities in the Mafeteng district, had started the project of piggery some years back. Mr. Mphuthing said the project was in the form of buying meat among the members in order to make a living. The group was formed by persons with disabilities from villages like; Ha Lekoatsa, Ha Bofihla and others around this council.



Mr. Mphuthing continued by saying each and everyone of us, was having his or stall where is keeping pigs and take care of them. Our initiative was mandated to promote the development of livelihood among us, again to make people understand that even under the disability there is life. What we were doing was to slaughter those pigs and buy from the person who slaughtered. It was helping us as such a person earn a lot of money at the same time to help the family with.

"It was our the intension to collaborate with other projects and ministries so that can be assisted with others strategies of taking care of those pigs, like ministry of agriculture as they also visited us and gave some advices." Said

He continued, "It was our hope that in future our production and supply chains will at the end creat jobs in the agricultural sector to some of

us, but due to difficulties we are always facing as persons with disabilities we had some challenges on the way. We no longer proceeding with the project but still want to continue if can have assistance as many of us still have stalls in our homes, also have been provided the place where can build stalls for our cooperation by the chief.

It is our plea to international orgasinsations or any sector that provides assistance to help our initiative to run again to benefit persons with disabilities, community members around our area. Concluded Mr. Mphuthing.



AUG, 2020

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## ADVOCACY WORK



LNFOD

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